

ANNAMITE CIVILIZATION

appe to the artist's talent and is more pleasing to the divinity who does not in the least mind his using materials taken from an older temple. Horizontal lines are favoured especially for pagodas. The Annamite does not look up to a divinity but renders a cult to the dead: he is renouncing bent over his rice-fields or his family's tombs, so that his whole life is rooted in the ground. Pagoda roofs are only slightly up-tied to indicate a transient rupture with this perpetual preoccupation with the soil. The rigidity and omnipresence of death are betrayed in ; inert quality of his architecture. The Annamite code has regulated the type of dwelling appropriate to each social group. Only mandarins might use durable materials and large dimensions, or indulge themselves in interior decoration. But he outwardly distinguishes their homes from those of poor people. Rich or poor, the Annamite consults a sorcerer as to the site of his home and a favourable day on which to begin building. As an additional precaution he will hang a rhinoceros' horn inside. Windows are un-
yawn, and the few tiny grilled openings allow little air to enter. The Annamite prefers it this way, for he believes that the wind is disease-
den. Nor does he mind the smoke-laden atmosphere, for it preserves the wood of his house and keeps away a multitude of hungry mos-
quitoes. Most of the houses are infested with rats and snakes of a
formless albeit ubiquitous character. Personal cleanliness is no greater in that of the house itself, where animals and humans live side by
side. Stagnant pools abound in the villages, and buffaloes rejoice to
all day long in these fetid waters. Such unhygienic conditions are
> delight of epidemics which spread with abandon throughout town

i country.

Painting is almost wholly the province of professionals.

Perspective
i proportion are regulated entirely by the whim of the artist. Unlike

> Chinese they paint little landscape, but

prefer as in the theatre a

end or military exploit in which tradition rather than improvisation

'ariably dominates.

Flie love of ceramics is universal in Annam, but little such work

now done there. The famous *Blew de Hue* came from China, as

I the Annamites' potter-teachers, and their art unfortunately dis-

>eared when they returned to their native land.

Pottery is made by

Annamite families, but the best professional work comes from

nkin. Bronze and brass were little used and only for cannon, bells,

1 urns, but work in the precious metals has always flourished.

reUery is the most prized possession of an Annamite woman: it forms